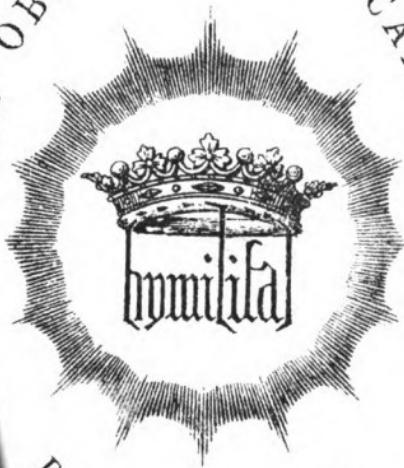


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THE RULE
OF THE
HOLY VIRGIN SAINT CLARE.

PERMISSU SUPERIORUM.

1621.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

Constitutions for the Convent
IN ITS PRESENT STATE,

APPROVED BY THE

MOST REV. DOCTOR TROY,

ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

THE SHORT NOTES ON THE DISPENSATIONS ARE BY THE REV.
M. P. KINSELLA, CAPUCHIN.

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Rule of the Holy Virgin St. Clare.

The Apostolical Confirmation of the Rule, which our holy Father Saint Francis gave unto our holy Mother Saint Clare.

INNOCENT, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God, to our beloved daughters in Jesus Christ, CLARE, Abbess, and to the other Sisters of the Monastery of Saint Damian, at Assisium, health and Apostolical benediction.

The Apostolical See is accustomed to descend to all pious requests, and graciously to favour the good and holy desires of those who do propose them; and therefore because you have humbly requested of us to approve and corroborate with our Apostolical confirmation, *the rule according to which you are to live in common*, in one spirit, and in the profession of most high poverty, the same rule having been given you by the holy

father Saint Francis, and which you received with great content and joy; which rule also our venerable brother the Bishop of Ostia has approved, as is amply expressed and declared in the letters of the said Bishop, conformably to the command which we gave him to confirm it, with our Apostolical authority committed to him in this part. We therefore now, condescending to your devout petition, do again confirm by these present letters the said rule with our Apostolical authority, inserting the tenor of the said letters word by word in these present letters, as follows:—

Hugolin, by the grace of God, Bishop of Ostia and of Veletri, to his most dear mother and daughter in Jesus Christ, Clare, Abbess of Saint Damian, at Assisium, and to her sisters as well present as to succeed, health and paternal benediction: for as you, my dearly beloved daughters in Jesus Christ, having contemned the pomps and delights of this world, and intending to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ and of his most holy Mother, have chosen to remain enclosed to serve God; we, applauding your holy resolution, with good will and paternal affection, courteously grant you your demands and holy



desires; and we confirm, by the Pope's authority and ours, for you and for all those who shall succeed in your Monastery, the form and rule of life, of holy union and of most high and sublime poverty, which the glorious father Saint Francis hath given you to observe, as well by word as by writing, which rule is here underneath specified as follows:—

IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD, AMEN.

CHAPTER I.

Here begins the rule and form of life of the Order of the Poor Sisters, given by St. Francis.

The rule and form of life, which the Poor Sisters of the Order of Saint Clare are to live by, and which the glorious father Saint Francis hath instituted, is: to observe the holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience, without property, and in chastity.

Secondly—Clare, unworthy handmaid of Jesus Christ, and little plant of our most

holy father Saint Francis, owes obedience and reverence to Pope Innocent and to his successors, who shall be lawfully and canonically chosen by the Church of Rome.

Thirdly—And as in the beginning of her conversion, she with her sisters vowed obedience to the most holy father Saint Francis, so, in like manner, she vows to observe the same obedience to his successors;* and the other sisters are always bound to obey the successors of the holy father Saint Francis, and to obey Sister Clare and all other Abbesses, who being lawfully and canonically chosen, shall succeed her.

CHAPTER II.

Of those who desire to enter into this Order, and how they shall be received.

When any one presents herself to you, through inspiration, to take upon her this

* By a decree of the Sacred Congregation, with the approbation of his Holiness Pope Benedict XIV., the jurisdiction of the provincial of the Recollects over the Poor Clare's of Dorset-street, now of Harold's-cross, has been transferred to the Archbishop of Dublin and his successors, who become thereby successors of Saint Francis.—See *Pope's Bull*, page 48.

life, the Abbess shall be obliged to ask the consent of all the sisters; if the greater number consent, having license from the Cardinal, your protector, the Abbess may receive her.

Secondly—When she is to be received, the Abbess is to examine her diligently, or cause her to be examined, concerning the Catholic Faith and the holy Sacraments of the Church, all which, if she believe, and faithfully confess, and promise steadfastly to observe to the end, then, if she have no husband, or in case she have, he must have entered into some religious order, and have made a vow of chastity, with the approbation of his Diocesan Bishop. Likewise, she must not be too far advanced in years, nor have any sickness or weakness of head, which may hinder her to observe the life she is to lead, and which is to be declared to her very particularly at her first entering.

Thirdly—if she be fit and willing, the words of the Holy Gospel shall be read unto her, to wit: Let her go and sell all she has, and give to the poor; which, if she cannot effect, her good will shall suffice.

Fourthly—The Abbess and all the sisters

shall be very careful not to busy their minds by meddling with her temporal goods, that she may freely dispose of them as God shall inspire her.

Fifthly—Nevertheless, if she ask their advice, they shall send her to some discreet person that fears God, through whose counsel her goods may be distributed to the poor.

Sixthly—Then her hair shall be cut round, and her secular habit shall be taken away, and the Abbess shall lend her three coats and one cloak; after which it is not lawful for her to go out of the Monastery without profitable, manifest, and reasonable cause.

Seventhly—When the year of her probation is expired, she shall be received to obedience, vowing perpetually to observe the life and form of your poverty.

Eighthly—None shall receive the black veil during the year of probation.

Ninthly—The sisters may also have light cloaks for the conveniency of their employments.

Tenthly—The Abbess shall discreetly provide that her sisters have clothes according to the times, places, and cold regions, and provide as she sees necessity requires.

Eleventhly—The young who are received into the Monastery before they are of sufficient age, shall have their hair cut off, and their secular habit taken away, and be clothed with such cloth as the Religious wear, according to the discretion of the Abbess; and when they are come to proper years, they shall take the habit, as others do, and pass their year of probation.

Twelfthly—And as well for them as the other Novices, the Abbess shall carefully provide a mistress, one of the discreetest of the Monastery, who shall diligently instruct them in modest manners and holy conversation, according to the form of your profession.

Thirteenthly—The same shall be observed in the admittance of the sisters who serve outside the Monastery, and those sisters may wear shoes.

Fourteenthly—None may dwell within the Monastery except they be received according to the form of your profession.

Fifteenthly—I do admonish, pray, and request my sisters, for the love of the most holy and sweet child Jesus, who was wrapped in poor clothes, and laid in a manger, and for

the love of his holy Mother, that they will always be clothed in poor clothes.

It is likewise required that none be received into the Order without license of the Protector. This power hath been given by divers Popes, and committed to the General or Provincial, as is set down in the Constitutions. Before any be received they must examine her, or get her examined by the Bishop or his Vicar, as is ordained by the Council of Trent (Sess. 15, c. 17). It is likewise necessary that the Novice should give away all she has to the poor before she enters the Monastery; this, at least, is to be performed by her before she be admitted to profession, agreeably to the Council of Trent (Sess. 25, c. 17). And the year of probation being ended, she is to be admitted if there be no impediment; and the Council says, that the time of the Noviciate being ended, if she be judged fit, she is to be received to profession, and if otherwise she is to be sent out of the Monastery. It is likewise to be observed, that the same Council also ordains (in the 25th Sess. c. 17) the necessity of acquainting the Bishop or his Vicar-General therewith, a month previous to her profession.

CHAPTER III.

Of the divine office, of fasting, confessing, and communicating.

The sisters who can read shall say the divine office according to the custom of the Friars Minors, wherefore they are to have Breviaries.*

Secondly—They shall read their office without song; and those who sometimes for some reasonable impediment cannot read their office, may say *Pater Nosters* in lieu thereof.

Thirdly—The other sisters who cannot read shall say four and twenty *Pater Nosters* for Matins; for Lauds, five; for Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None, for each of these hours seven are required; twelve for Evening Song; and for Complin, seven.

Fourthly—For the Evening Song for the dead, seven *Pater Nosters*, with *Requiem*

* The Religious of Harold's-cross are dispensed from saying this office by a decree of our holy Father Pope Pius VII., and are bound, in lieu thereof, to say the Office of the Blessed Virgin.—See *Pope's Bull*, page 49.

Eternam, and twelve for Matins. The sisters who can read are obliged to read the office of the dead, as is ordained in the Breviary.

Fifthly—When any sister of your Monastery departs this life, the sisters shall say fifty *Pater Nosters* for her soul.

Sixthly—The sisters shall always fast, but on the Nativity of our Lord, and then they may make two refections, upon what day soever it falls.* The young, weak, and those who serve outside the Monastery, the Abbess shall dispense with, as she thinks convenient; but in time of manifest necessity, the sisters are not bound to corporal fasting.

Seventhly—They shall confess, with licence of the Abbess, at least twelve times a year, when they shall take care not to use any words which have no relation to their confession or the good of their soul.

Eighthly—They shall receive the Blessed Sacrament seven times a year, as on the Nativity of our Lord, on Maundy Thursday, on Easter day, on Whit Sunday, on the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, on Saint Francis's day, and All Saints' day.

* The Religious of Harold's-cross are dispensed from all other fasts except those of the Church.—See *Pope's Brief*, page 52.

Ninthly—It is lawful for the Chaplain to celebrate within the Monastery, in order to administer Communion to the sick.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Election of the Abbess.

In the Election of the Abbess the sisters are bound to observe it in the canonical manner.

Secondly—They shall speedily invite the General Minister, or at least the Provincial of the Friars Minors, to exhort them with the word of God to concord and union, and to seek the common good in the election.

Thirdly—None shall be chosen who is not professed, or if they choose such a one for Abbess they shall not obey her, except she vow to observe their poverty.

Fourthly—When the Abbess dies, the election of another shall be made in the same manner.

Fifthly—if it appear that the Abbess is not sufficient for the service of the sisters and common good, they are bound to choose

another as speedily as they can, in the form before mentioned.

Sixthly—She who is chosen should weigh well the charge she has undertaken, and consider to whom she must render an account of the flock committed to her care.

Seventhly—She should endeavour to excel her sisters in virtue and piety, and be superior to them in holiness more than in authority, as by her good example they will obey her more from love than fear.

Eighthly—She should take care not to shew partiality to any, lest it should give scandal to the community.

Ninthly—She shall comfort the desolate, and be the last refuge of the afflicted, lest the weak, wanting comfort, be overcome with sadness and despair.

Tenthly—She shall follow the community in all things, principally in the Church doctrine, refectory, and in the infirmary, as also in her attire; and the Vicaress is likewise bound to observe the same order.

Eleventhly—The Abbess shall assemble the sisters to chapter, at least once a week, where she, with her other sisters, shall humbly confess and acknowledge all their public faults

and negligences. She is likewise to confer with her sisters concerning such things as are for the benefit and decency of the Monastery ; for sometimes God reveals his wisdom to those whom they may think the least.

Twelfthly—No great debt shall be contracted without the consent of all the sisters, and in time of manifest necessity, it must be done by their procurator.

Thirteenthly—The Abbess and other sisters shall take care not to receive or keep any thing for others within the Monastery, to prevent any scandal or clamour which it might cause.

Fourteenthly—All the officers of the Monastery are to be chosen by the unanimous consent of all the sisters, in order to maintain peace and union among them.

Fifteenthly—The Abbess shall choose eight of the discreetest sisters, whose counsel she is obliged to follow in matters concerning their manner of life.

Sixteenthly—The sisters, when they think it expedient and necessary, have power to change their officers, and choose others in their place.

CHAPTER V.

Of silence, and the manner of speaking at the parlour and grate.

From Compline until Tierce the sisters are to keep silence, except those who serve outside the Monastery.

Secondly—They shall always be silent in the Church, Dormitory, and in the Refectory only while they eat; it is lawful for them to speak in the Infirmary, for the recreation and service of the sick.

Thirdly—The sisters may, notwithstanding, at all times and in all places communicate to one another, in a gentle manner, whatever they think is necessary.

Fourthly—It is not lawful for the sisters to speak at the parlour or at the grate, without the Abbess or Vicarress's permission; and those who have liberty to speak at the parlour must not converse but in the presence of two sisters, who must hear what is said to her there.

Fifthly—None are to attempt going to the grate, except there be present at least three,

and appointed by the Abbess, and those out of the eight chosen by the unanimous consent of the sisters for the Abbess's Council.

Sixthly—The Abbess and Vicarress are bound to observe this manner of speaking at the grate, which should happen as seldom as possible, but at the gate it should never be permitted.

Seventhly—And at the grate there is to be a cloth put within, and not to be opened, except while a sermon is preaching, or while they are speaking to one another.

Eighthly—There shall be before the grate a wooden door, well secured by two locks and bolts of iron, which in the night, principally, is to be locked with two keys, one of which the Abbess is to keep, and the Sacristan the other.

Ninthly—The door shall be always shut, except while the divine office is reading, or for the causes above mentioned.

Tenthly—None are to speak at the grate before the rising or after the setting of the sun, in any manner whatsoever.

Eleventhly—At the parlour there shall be always a cloth, which should never be taken off.

Twelfthly—No sisters are allowed to speak at the parlour within Saint Martin's Lent, or the great Lent, except to confess to the Priest, or for some other manifest necessity, which shall be committed to the Abbess or her Vicarress's discretion.

CHAPTER VI.

The sisters are not to receive any possessions, or through any person in trust for them.

First—After the heavenly Father had vouchsafed, through his divine grace, to inflame my heart in such a manner, I, at the example and doctrine of our holy father, Saint Francis, began to do penance. A little after his conversion, I, with my sisters, did willingly vow obedience to him.

Secondly—The holy father perceiving that we feared no poverty, labour, tribulation, or the contempt of this world, but esteemed these as great riches; he being moved with compassion towards us, did write a form of life for us at the time we made this vow.

Thirdly—Considering, said Saint Francis, that through the inspiration of God you have

made yourselves daughters and handmaids of the Most High and Sovereign King and Heavenly Father, and having permitted yourselves to be guided by the Holy Ghost, choosing to live according to the perfection of the Holy Gospel, I will and promise, by myself and my brothers, to have always as diligent a care over you as over them. And this he diligently fulfilled while he lived on earth, and willed it should be fulfilled by his brothers.

Fourthly—And that neither we nor those who should follow us, should deviate from the holy poverty we had embraced, our holy father, a little before his death, wrote for us again his last will, conceived in these words: “I, Brother Francis, the least of all, will follow the life and poverty of our most sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ, and of his most holy Mother, and will persevere in the same to the end. And I beseech you all, my daughters and sisters in Jesus Christ, to live in the holy poverty and life you have chosen, and not to depart therefrom, through the teaching or counsel of any one.” And as I, Clare, have always been careful with my sisters to observe the holy poverty which we promised to God, and to the holy father Saint Francis,

in like manner, the Abbesses who are to succeed me in this office, with their sisters, are obliged to observe it inviolably to the end, and not to have or receive possessions, or have any property by themselves or by others, interposed for them, or any thing that may be called property, except a little ground, which necessity and decency require for the use of the Monastery; and this ground should be converted to no other purpose than to a garden tilled for the use of the sisters.

CHAPTER VII.

In what manner the sisters are to observe their manual works.

The sisters to whom God has bestowed the gift of working, should employ themselves faithfully and devoutly after Tierce, in such works as tend to the common good and decency of the Monastery, by which idleness, the enemy of the soul, will be expelled; and at the same time they are to be cautious not to let temporal things quench the spirit of devotion and prayer, to which they are only intended to contribute.

Secondly—The sisters shall be obliged to declare in Chapter, to the Abbess or her Vicarress, and before the company, what work they have done.

Thirdly—The same is to be observed if any send alms for the necessities of the sisters, that they may all, in common, recommend them to God, and the alms are to be distributed for the good of the community by the Abbess or her Vicarress, with the advice of the Council.

CHAPTER VIII.

The sisters are not to appropriate any thing to themselves; and of the sick sisters.

The sisters are not to appropriate anything to themselves, neither house, place, nor any thing whatsoever, but be as pilgrims and strangers in this world, serving our Lord in poverty and humility.

Secondly—They shall beg alms with great confidence, and not be ashamed of so doing, seeing our Lord was poor for the love of us in this world.

Thirdly—This is the height of the highest

poverty, which has made you, my most dearly beloved sisters, heirs and queens of the kingdom of Heaven; and be poor in temporal things, that you may be ennobled with celestial virtues; let this be your portion, which leads to the land of the living, to which I beg of you, my dearly beloved sisters, to adhere, and never to possess any thing under heaven, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourthly—It is not lawful for any sister to send or receive letters, or to dispose of any thing out of the Monastery, without the Mother Abbess's consent, or to have any thing which she does not allow, or has not given her permission to keep.

Fifthly—if any of the sisters receive any thing from their parents, or any other person, she may make use of it with the Abbess's leave, and if not, the Abbess may dispose of it in charity to any other sister who most wants it. If money be sent to any, the Abbess, with the advice of her Council, is obliged to provide them with all necessaries.

Sixthly—The Abbess is strictly obliged, either by herself or by others whom she employs, to find out the necessities of the sick sisters, and to provide them remedies

for their diseases, as well as meat and other necessary things, according to the means of the house, and to provide for and attend the sick sisters in the manner that they would willingly be served themselves, if they were in the same condition.

Seventhly—They shall freely declare to one another their necessities, for if a true mother love and nourish her carnal daughter, with how much care and diligence ought not a sister to love and nourish her spiritual sister.

Eighthly—The sick may lie on beds of chaff, and have a pillow of feathers under their heads, and those who have need may use socks and quilts.

Ninthly—The aforesaid sick, when visited by those who, for their service, are allowed to enter into the Monastery, may briefly answer such as speak to them, with good and edifying words ; and the other sisters who have leave to be present, are not to speak to those who enter thus the Monastery, but in the presence of two of the discreet sisters, appointed by the Abbess or Vicaress, who must hear what is said ; and the Abbess and her Vicaress are themselves obliged to observe this manner of

speaking. This is not now necessary, seeing none enter but in the cases permitted by the Council of Trent (Sess. 25, c. 5).

CHAPTER IX.

That penance is to be enjoined the sisters who offend; and of their demeanour outside the Monastery.

First—If any sister, by the instigation of the enemy, sin mortally, against the form of her profession, and be admonished two or three times by the Abbess or the other sisters, and do not amend, as many days as she remains refractory, so many days she is to eat bread and water on the ground before all the sisters in the refectory, and endure greater penance if the Abbess think proper, and if she still remains obstinate and contumacious, they are to pray to God to give her grace to be penitent.

Secondly—The Abbess and sisters are to be careful not to shew anger or disquiet at their sister's offences, for anger and perturbation hinder charity in themselves and others.

Thirdly—If any dissension happen among

the sisters, which God forbid there should, she who gave the occasion, before she offers to God the sacrifice of prayer, shall prostrate herself at her sister's feet, and not only beg pardon, but also humbly entreat her to pray devoutly to her Saviour, that he may be pleased to forgive her.

Fourthly—The sisters who are injured are to remember the words of our Saviour, who says: If you do not forgive with your whole heart, your heavenly Father shall not forgive you; therefore you must freely forgive your sisters that injured you.

Fifthly—The sisters who serve outside the Monastery are to stay no longer than manifest necessity requires.

Sixthly—They shall appear modestly, speak but little, to the end that those who see them may be edified. They are to be careful not to keep suspected company or fellowship with any one, or to stand godmothers to any man's son or daughter, lest there should arise thereby scandal or perturbation. They shall not presume to relate in the Monastery any news they heard, nor in the world any thing that is said or done in the Monastery, to prevent any scandal that might arise from it. If any

of the sisters should offend through ignorance, the Abbess is charitably to enjoin her some penance, but if through an evil custom, she is to give her a greater penance, according to her fault, by the advice of her Council.

CHAPTER X.

Of the admonishment and visitation of the sisters.

First—The Abbess shall visit and admonish her sisters humbly, and charitably correct them, not commanding them to do anything contrary to the good of their souls, or against the form of their profession.

Secondly—The sisters are to remember that, for the love of God, they renounced their own will, and that they are bound to obey their Abbess in all things, which they vowed to observe, and which are not contrary to their salvation and religious profession.

Thirdly—The Abbess shall be so familiar with them, that she may speak to and deal with them as mistresses do with their servants, for the Abbess ought to be as a servant to all her sisters.

Fourthly—I admonish and exhort my sis-

ters, in Jesus Christ, that they beware of pride, vain glory, envy, and covetousness, and that they fly all care and solicitude for this world, and not to have detraction, murmuring, or dissension among them.

Fifthly—They shall always be solicitous to preserve the union of charity among them, which is the bond of perfection. Those who cannot read are not to endeavour for learning, but to consider that they ought to desire, above all things, the spirit of our Lord, and the holy operation thereof; and always to pray to our Lord with a pure heart, to practise humility and patience in sickness and tribulation, to love those who persecute, find fault with, and chastise them ; for our Lord says : Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven, and those who persevere to the end shall be saved.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the duty of the Portress.

The portress shall be of sufficient age, discreet, and of mature manners. She shall reside in the day time in an open cell, without

a door, and have a proper companion to supply her place. The door shall have two sides, opening in the middle, furnished with two strong locks, and several bolts and iron bars. In the night, principally, it shall be locked with two keys, one the portress is to keep, and the Abbess the other. In the day time the door is not to be left open, but locked with one key; and they are to be careful not to let in any who would enter, except they have licence from the Cardinal Protector.

Secondly—The sisters shall let none enter the Monastery before the rising or after the setting of the sun; neither are they to permit any to enter the Monastery, except for manifest, reasonable, and inevitable cause. If any Bishop should have leave to say Mass within, either for the benediction of the Abbess, or to consecrate any religious, or for any other important matter, he shall be content at that time with a few decent attendants.

Thirdly—if it be necessary that any one should enter the cloister to do any work, the Abbess shall carefully appoint one at the gate, who shall let none enter but such as are necessary for the work; and the sisters shall be careful not to suffer themselves to be seen by those who enter the Monastery.

CHAPTER XII.

Your visitor* shall be always of the Order of the Friars Minors, according to the will and command of your Cardinal, and shall be such a one as is known to be very religious, and whose office it is to reform the head, as well as the members, in all the faults they commit against the form of their profession.

Secondly—He shall be in an open place, that he may be seen by others.

Thirdly—He may speak to all collectively, and to each in particular, of the things that relate to the office of visitation, and of those which he thinks most expedient for their good.

Fourthly—We require the favor of the same order, through the charity of our Lord, and of our holy Father Saint Francis, to have a Chaplain, with a Priest of a good character, for a companion, as also two lay brothers, who are lovers of modesty and of holy conversation, to assist us in our poverty, as we have hitherto had of the Friars Minors.

* See *Pope's Bull*, page 48.

Fifthly—The Chaplain is not to enter the Convent without his companion, and entering, they shall be in an open place, to be seen by each other, as also by the sisters.

Sixthly—They may enter to confess the sick that cannot go to the grate, to give them the Blessed Sacrament and Extreme Unction, to read the recommendations of the soul when they are in danger of death, to celebrate Mass and the Offices for the Dead ; and, according to the discretion of the Abbess, others may enter to dig the grave.

The sisters are likewise bound to have for their protector, governor, and reformer, one of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, the same that our holy Father the Pope ordains for the Friars Minors, that we being subject to him and the Holy Roman Church, may remain steadfast in the Catholic faith, and observe the holy poverty and humility of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his holy Mother, and the holy Gospel, which we have vowed. Amen.

Here ends the rule of the poor sisters, dated at Perusia, the 6th of September, the tenth year of the Pontificate of our holy Father, Pope Innocent IV.

Here follows the rest of the Bull for the confirmation of the rule.

“Therefore let not any person violate or disannul this our Letter and Bull of Confirmation, or by rash attempt to contradict it; which if any one presume to do, let him know that he incurs the indignation of Almighty God, and of his holy Apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul. Dated at Assisium, the 9th of August, and the eleventh year of our Pontificate.”

LAUS DEO.

Here begins the Testament of our holy Mother Saint Clare.

In the Name of our Lord. Amen.

Among the other benefits which we have received from our bountiful Benefactor, the King of Mercies, and daily receive from him, for all which we are bound to praise him, we should in a most particular manner be grateful to him for that of our vocation, for which

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the more perfect and great it is, the more we ought to thank him. The Apostle says: *See your vocation* (1 Cor., i. 26). God himself hath shewn us the way, by word and example, and our holy father Saint Francis, a perfect lover and follower of the same way, hath taught it us. Therefore, my beloved sisters, we ought to value this inestimable benefit which God hath bestowed on us, preferably to many others, and which he hath vouchsafed to work in us, through his servant our holy father Saint Francis, not only since our conversion, but even when we were in the captivity and vanity of this world. For, after his conversion, not having as yet any brothers, he repaired to Saint Damian's Church, where he was visited by divine consolations, and where, wholly abandoning the world, he was filled by the Holy Ghost with joy and illumination, and he prophesied to us what our Lord had afterwards fulfilled. Standing on the walls of the said Church, speaking with a loud voice, in the French tongue, to some poor people who lived there, he said: *Come help me in this Church of Saint Damian, for women shall come here by whose good life and holy conversation*

our Heavenly Father shall be honored in his whole Church. Wherein we may observe the great goodness of God towards us, who, out of his abundant mercy and charity, did vouchsafe to prophecy our vocation and election by his servant; and not only did our Father foretell these things of us, but also of those who hereafter shall be partakers of the vocation which our Lord hath called us to. With what care of soul and body are we not then obliged to keep the commandments of God, and of our holy father Saint Francis, to the end that with the grace of God we may repay him his talent multiplied and increased; for the Lord hath placed us as an example and pattern, not to the laity alone, but likewise very particularly to all our sisters whom he shall call to our course of life, to this end, that they may become as a mirror and example to those who are in the world. Whereas our Lord hath honored us with so high a vocation as to serve as models to those who ought to be an example to others, how much are we not bound to bless and praise him for so doing? Let us be delighted in him; let us live according to the form above mentioned; let us be an example to those

who follow us, that so after those short labours, we may receive the reward of everlasting life. A little after the conversion of Saint Francis, whose example and teaching caused me to begin to do penance, the Heavenly Father, through his great mercy and grace, was pleased to inflame my heart. I therefore, shortly after my own conversion, with a few sisters, whom our Lord had joined with me, did willingly vow obedience to the holy father Francis, on account of his marvellous life and holy doctrine; and this we were inspired to do by the light of the grace of the heavenly father. Saint Francis then observing that although we were as to body weak and tender, yet were not dismayed by any necessity, poverty, labours, tribulation, or contempt of this world, but that we considered all those as great pleasures, a matter which he had experienced by the example of his brothers. He rejoiced in our Lord, and moved with charity towards us, obliged himself and his brothers to have always a diligent and special care of us. It was by the will of God, and at the desire of our holy father Saint Francis, that we went to dwell in the Church of Saint Damian, for we had dwelt

before in another place; soon after which our Lord, through his great mercy and grace, multiplied us in number; so thus was fulfilled what our Lord had foretold by his servant. A little after he wrote for us this form of life, and principally insisted that we should persevere in most holy poverty; to this he often admonished us in his life time by many sermons and exhortations, thereby moving us to love and observe it; this also our holy father Saint Francis, with his brothers, did honor and observe during his life. Wherefore I, Clare, servant and handmaid of Christ, and of the poor sisters of Saint Damian, although unworthy, yet being the little plant of our holy father Saint Francis, considering these things with my other sisters, and the great profession we had made to such a father; fearing our own and the frailty of others who were to succeed us after his death, who, next to God, was our pillar and comfort, I again and again bind myself to our Blessed Lady, to practise holy poverty; to the end that the sisters now with me, and those who are to succeed after my death, may by no means swerve from it, which I have always been careful (with the grace of God) to practise

and cause it to be observed. I have likewise, for greater security, made profession of it to our holy father Pope Innocent IV., in whose time we began, and have renewed it to his successors, that so we might by no means deviate from the holy poverty which we had vowed to God and to Saint Francis.

Wherefore I, in all humility, bending the knee of my inward and outward man, commend to the Church of Rome and to our holy father the Pope, and especially to the Cardinal to whose protection, together with the Friars Minors, we are committed, that for the love of God, who was born with great poverty in the manger, lived poorly in this world, and died poorly on the cross, they will preserve this little flock, which God the Father hath gained to his Church, by the words and example of our holy father Saint Francis. May God, who caused them to follow the humility and poverty of his dearly beloved Son and of his holy Mother, and to make vow of the holy poverty which we promised to God and to Saint Francis, grant we may be strengthened by his grace from above to observe it. And as God gave to us our holy Father Saint Francis as our founder and helper in his

service, in those things which we vowed to the Almighty and Saint Francis to observe; and as the holy Francis was careful while he lived to water us as his little plants, both by word and example; so I, Clare, commend and leave my sisters, as well those with me as those who are to succeed me, to his successors and to the whole order, that they may always assist them to soar higher and higher in the service of God, and to accomplish and observe holy poverty. If it happen at any time that the said sisters should leave their country or city to go to any other, they are firmly bound after my death, in what place soever they may be, to observe the holy poverty which they have vowed to God and to Saint Francis. Those who are in office, as also the other sisters, shall receive no more ground than extreme necessity requires, such as a garden for recreation. And if for the defence and decency of the Cloister, it be needful to have more ground, they are to take only what is necessary, and which they are not to plough or sow. I admonish you all, my sisters, who are and shall be, to endeavour to walk in the ways of simplicity, humility, poverty, modesty, and holy conversation, which

we, in the beginning of our conversion, were taught by Christ and our holy father Saint Francis, so that, not through ours, but through the merits and mercy of the liberal Giver, the Father of Mercies, the odour of our good name may be diffused amongst those who are afar off, as well as amongst those who are near us.

For the love of our Lord Jesus keep union among you; the charity you have inwardly, shew it outwardly by works, that through your example, the sisters who are called to your profession may increase in the love of God and mutual charity. I also beg of all those who are chosen to offices among the sisters, that they will study to excel the others in virtue and modesty, rather than in the authority of their office, that by their example, the sisters who were called to religion may be moved to obey them from love as from respect for their office. The Abbess must be careful and discreet towards her sisters, as a good mother is towards her children; she must carefully provide for every one according to their necessities, out of the alms that God is pleased to send her; she must likewise be sweet to all, that the sisters

may, without fear or doubt, declare to her their necessities, and have confident recourse to her.

When the Abbess and the sisters shall think any thing necessary, let those who are subject remember that, for the love of God, they renounced their own will, wherefore they are to obey their mother, as they have of their own accord vowed to God to do, that seeing their union and the charity which they show to each other, she may the easier bear the charge of her office; and as it is painful and heavy, they are, by their goodness and holy conversation, to render it sweet and pleasing. And as the way is narrow, and straight is the gate which leads to life, and as few there are that find it, blessed are they who receive grace to walk in that way and to persevere to the end. Wherefore let us be careful who have entered into the ways of our Lord, that by our fault or negligence we fall not from the same, as by committing sin we shall injure our Lord, his Blessed Mother, our holy father Saint Francis, and the triumphant church; for it is written, cursed are those who decline from the commandments.

To obtain this grace, I bend my knee to

the Heavenly Father, through the merits of our Lord Jesus, his Blessed Mother, of our holy father Saint Francis, and all the saints, that his Divine Majesty, who gave us a good beginning, will be pleased to grant us the grace to proceed in the same perfection, and to persevere therein to the end.

Dearly beloved sisters, present and to come, I leave you this writing in token of our Lord's benediction, the benediction of our holy father Saint Francis, and of me, your mother and servant.

Here ends the testament of our holy mother, the glorious Virgin Saint Clare.

Saint Clare's benediction to her sisters, present and to come.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

My dearly beloved sisters, may our Lord give you his holy benediction, and look on you with the eye of his mercy, and give you his peace, as also to those who shall enter and persevere in this our Monastery, and to all

others of the order who shall persevere to the end in this most holy poverty. I, Clare, servant of Jesus Christ, and little plant of our holy father Saint Francis, your mother and sister, though unworthy, do beseech our Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercession of his most holy Mother, the holy Angels, Archangels, Saints, and our holy father Saint Francis, that it will please him to give and confirm to you this benediction in heaven and on earth, by multiplying in your graces and virtues among his servants in the militant church, and in heaven in his triumphant church, by elevating you among his saints. I give you my benediction whilst living, and after my death as far as I am able, with all the blessings wherewith the Father of Mercies hath or shall bless his spiritual children in heaven or on earth, and all the blessings which the spiritual Mother shall give her children. Amen.

Be always lovers of God, of your souls, and of your sisters.

Be always careful to keep what you vowed to our Lord, and may he be always with you, and you with him. Amen.

By a decree of the sacred Congregation, with the approbation of his Holiness, Pope Benedict XIV., the jurisdiction of the Provincial of the Recollects over the Poor Clare's, of Dorset-street, now of Harold's Cross, has been transferred to the Archbishop of Dublin, and to his successors, who thereby become the successors of Saint Francis. See the following letter:—

VERY ILLUSTRIOUS AND MOST REV. LORD, AS A BROTHER,

The cause between the separated Nuns of Saint Clare or Clare's, and the Father Provincial of the Recollects, having been discussed in this sacred Congregation, the same has decreed with the approbation of his Holiness, that the aforesaid Nuns shall remain under the jurisdiction of your Lordship, whom it enjoins not to permit any other one to receive the religious habit, without the previous knowledge and assent of the aforesaid sacred Congregation. This letter is designed to render your Lordship informed in the mean time of the said resolution, and I pray God our Lord to preserve and perfectly prosper you.

I remain, my Lord,

Yours most affectionately, as a Brother,

S. CARD. VALENTI, *Prefect.*

NICHOLAS LERCARI, *Secretary.*

Rome, 7th August, 1752.

His Lordship the Archbishop of Dublin.

I certify that this copy is conformable to the original.

PATRICK FITZSIMMONS,
*Doctor of Sacred Theology, Vicar-General and Dean
of Dublin, Prothonotary Apostolic.*

(SEAL.)

I certify that the foregoing translation is a true one.

 J. T. TROY,
Rom. Cath. Archbp. of Dublin, &c.

Dublin, 6th of July, 1807.

From an audience had of his Holiness Pope Pius VII. by me, the underwritten Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for propagating the faith, on the 10th day of June, 1804;

His Holiness having considered what is stated in the memorial, has benignly granted to the Archbishop of Dublin, Memorialist, the faculty of commuting by Apostolical authority, especially delegated to him for the purpose, the recital of the Divine Office by the Nuns mentioned in the Memorial, into that of the shorter one of the small office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on condition that the aforesaid Nuns do really take upon themselves the duty of instructing poor girls in the doctrine of the Catholic Church, and in the practice of religion, and whilst they shall comply with the same, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome on the day and in the year above mentioned.

DOMINICK, Archbishop of Myra,

(SEAL.)

Secretary.

I hereby certify that the foregoing translation is a true one. Witness my hand and seal.

 J. T. TROY, *Archbp. of Dublin, &c.*

Dublin, 12th of July, 1807.

(SEAL.)

Petition from the Archbishop of Dublin, to obtain permission from his Holiness to expunge some observances of the rule, also to draw up new constitutions.

MOST HOLY FATHER,

The Most Rev. JOHN THOMAS TROY, Archbishop of Dublin, humbly represents to your Holiness, that authorized by your Holiness, he has established in that city a Convent of Clare Nuns, who, together with the other usual vows, take an additional one of instructing poor female children, to the great advantage of the Catholics of his diocess. As, however, among their rules there are some which contravene the fulfilment of the duty imposed by the additional vow, he therefore again humbly prays, that your Holiness will authorize him to cancel such rules as are incompatible with the aforesaid duty, and to

substitute any others which he may deem necessary, agreeably to what your Holiness has been pleased to grant to the Carmelite Nuns of the same city.

The Pope's Answer to the preceding letter.

At an audience granted by his Holiness, Pius VII., on the 14th day of August, 1814;

The above petition having been presented by me, the undersigned Secretary of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, and his Holiness having considered its contents, with a view to enable the Nuns in question to attend conveniently to the religious and charitable instruction of poor girls, and to observe inviolably the vow which regards that duty as well as the other vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, has been graciously pleased to authorize the above mentioned Archbishop to expunge from the rules of said Institution such as might oppose the duty of instructing poor children, and to add any other which he may think serviceable and necessary for promoting that object; the rules of said order

or any others of a contrary tendency notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, from the Palace of the aforesaid Congregation, on the 14th day of August, 1814.

Gratis, without any cost or payment whatever.

J. B. QUARANTETTO,
Secretary.

(A COPY.)

Brief from his Holiness, which includes all the commutations granted by the Holy See, in one Bull.

POPE PIUS VII.

In perpetual memory. Calling to mind this passage of St. John Chrysostom, to wit, that virgins consecrated to God emulate the divine philosophy, because, although clothed with mortal flesh, they express in themselves that angelical kind of life upon earth, which is led by the incorporeal powers in heaven; We therefore do willingly grant in the Lord whatever we think may contribute to increase their religious perfection. As therefore, our

beloved daughters in Christ, the Abbess and Religious of the Order of Saint Francis and Saint Clare, of the City of Dublin, desiring to imitate not only the Magdalen employed in contemplation at the feet of Christ our Lord, but also to tread in the footsteps of Martha ministering to him, have imposed on themselves the obligation of instructing poor female children in the Catholic faith, and the principles of sound morality, and this at the instance of our venerable brother John Thomas, Archbishop of the same city, who hath never left anything undone to promote therein, both by word and example, the greater increase of the Catholic religion, to the end that the aforesaid Religious may be the better enabled to labour more diligently in the discharge of this new and important office; We, by the rescript of Dominick Coppola, of happy memory, late Archbishop of Myra, and Secretary to the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, dated from our Audience Court, the x. day of June, MDCCCV., commuted the recitation of the Divine Office, that is, the canonical hours which the same Religious used to discharge previously to that period, into the recitation of the little Office of the

Blessed Virgin. We dispensed after that by a similar rescript issued from the same, our Audience Court, the xviii. day of December last, the same Religious from the obligation of observing the fasts and abstinences prescribed in their Rule and Constitutions, the fast and abstinences commanded in general by the Church, to remain firm and permanent. We declared moreover, in order to quiet the consciences of the same Religious, that there is nothing contained in their Rule and Constitutions which obliges, either under a slight or a grievous fault, except the three accustomed vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and another fourth vow of instructing poor female children, and other poor little girls, as these particulars are more fully declared in the fore-mentioned rescripts, the tenor of which, it is our will, should be considered as if they were expressed and inserted in this present Brief. But as this institution undertaken in the City of Dublin, doth daily increase and flourish by the blessing of the Lord, so that there are about seventy girls at present who are well and rightly instructed by the aforesaid Religious, and therefore the Archbishop himself and the said Religious

desire, for the better execution and performance of the foregoing rescripts, that both the one and the other may be confirmed by us, and by this Holy See, and that the Religious may be enriched with those spiritual favors which have been granted for other regular orders devoted to the instruction of youth; and lastly, that their formulary of profession may be suitably changed. They got therefore an humble petition presented to us, to the end that we might, through our Apostolical benignity, vouchsafe to agree opportunely to their aforesaid prayer, and to grant their petition. We therefore, solely, that these presents may have their full effect, being desirous to impart particular favors and concessions to those Religious, and that each individual among them is and shall be absolved by this Brief, from whatever sentence of excommunication, suspension, and interdict, and from other ecclesiastical censures and punishments, should they have in any manner incurred them, whether pronounced by the law or by man, upon any cause or occasion. Inclined to accede to such petitions, upon the report of our beloved Son, Master John Baptist Quarentetto, Secretary to the aforesaid

Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and considering the two foregoing re-scripts, as if inserted in this present Brief, We approve and confirm all and the same, in virtue of those our letters of our Apostolical authority, with all and everything therein expressed and contained ; and we add to them the force of our inviolable, perpetual, and Apostolical stability, and both supply and remedy all defects, whether of right or fact, which may have in any manner whatever crept into them. Confiding therefore in the authority committed to us by the Lord, and in the mercy of God, and by the authority of his holy Apostles Peter and Paul, we give, grant, and communicate for ever, by our authority, and in virtue of these letters, to all and every one of the present Religious, and for ever, according to time and circumstances, to all their successors of the same Institute, as well plenary as partial indulgences, and other spiritual favors, which have at other periods of time been granted by this Apostolical See to regular communities and individuals composing them who educate youth, agreeably to their Institute, in the principles of the Christian Doctrine and sound morality,

provided they duly comply with the conditions necessary to obtain such indulgences, notwithstanding our rule and that of the Apostolical Chancery, of not making the like concessions. Lastly, we will and command that the regular profession to be made, for the time to come, by those Religious, shall be expressed in the following terms, namely : "I, [N. N.] do vow unto the Almighty God, to the most glorious Virgin Mary, the Mother of Orphans, and to our holy father Saint Francis, and to our holy mother Saint Clare, and to all the Saints, and to you, Rev. Mother Abbess, and to all your successors, or to those who shall hold your place, to observe all the days of my life the Rule and Form of living of the poor sisters of Saint Clare, given to her by the same Saint Francis, and confirmed by Pope Innocent IV., and mitigated successively by Pope Benedict XIV., and our most holy father Pius VII., and thus to live without any temporal property, in obedience and chastity; and I devote myself in a particular manner to the care and instruction of poor female orphan children, and also to observe enclosure, according to circumstance, time, and place." We decree that these our present

letters shall remain firm, valid, and efficacious, and have and obtain their full force and effect. And thus should the foregoing rescripts be judged and defined by all ordinary judges and delegates, even by the Auditors of causes in the Apostolic court, and the Nuncios of the Apostolic See, we deprive them and each of them of any power and authority of judging and interpreting them otherwise; and we render their decision null and void, if it happen that any one of them should attempt to decide otherwise on these rescripts, whether knowingly or ignorantly, by any authority whatsoever, notwithstanding Apostolical constitutions and ordinances, and even the oath of the Religious of such order, ratified by Apostolical sanction, or strengthened by any stability whatever, by statutes and customs, likewise by privileges, indults, and Apostolical letters, in whatever manner granted, confirmed, and renewed, as far as contrary to the presents, from all which and each of them, and the tenor of them, they being considered as fully and sufficiently expressed, and from word to word, inserted in these presents, we derogate specially and expressly for the present time only, as we do from all other things

contrary to the foregoing, that the presents may have their full effect, leaving all other things not derogated from in their full force.

Dated Rome, at S. Mary Major's, under the Fisherman's Seal, the XIII. day of May, MDCCCXVIII, the 9th year of our Pontificate.

L. CARD. ANTONELLI.

Being collated, it agrees word for word with the original. In testimony of which, &c.

✠ BR. RICHARD LUKE CONCANEN,
Bishop of New York.

I certify the above to be a faithful translation from an attested copy of the original.

✠ J. T. TROY,
R. C. Archbp. of Dublin, &c.

Dublin, 11th January, 1813.



CONSTITUTIONS,

ETC.



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ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS have judged it expedient that a copy of the primitive rule should be printed and bound with the following Constitutions, given in the year 1812. Although the latter is our rule in practice, as may be seen explained in the Introduction, and approved by a Brief from the Holy See, they think, notwithstanding, it would prove useful to peruse it occasionally, as the spirit of our holy founders is so much diffused through the body of it.



A. M. D. G.

CONSTITUTIONS

FOR THE

Convent of Poor Clares, Harold's-cross.

INTRODUCTION.

The many changes which the religious family, for which the following Constitutions were drawn up, has undergone from the time it formed a separate establishment to the present day, might cause uninformed persons to ask what those Religious are in their present state of existence; the answer is brief and clear, they form a Convent of *Poor Clares*, *for the instruction of female orphans*. They are *Poor Clares* because they are not only lineally descended from the religious family of which Saint Clare and Saint Francis of Assisium were the illustrious parents, but because

they ever have lived, and still do live, according to the form of life and the *Rule* given them by that holy virgin. The various mitigations of the original rule made by the Sovereign Pontiffs, whether for the entire order in general, or for this convent in particular, were judged necessary modifications, according to the varying necessities of time, place, and other circumstances, but they did not destroy the substance of the rule, nor give it any other spirit than that of Saint Clare. The substance of the rule remains, because the vows of religion referred to the specific object of the founder, and the domestic government which regulates their practice, still remains. The spirit of the rule was the spirit of evangelical poverty. The highest perfection of this virtue constituted its specific object, since every other engagement and practice was to be referred to it. This spirit still animates the life which the religious of this Convent are bound to lead, and on them it depends to carry it to the highest perfection. Great austerities add rigour to poverty, but do not constitute its perfection. Jesus Christ came eating and drinking, his life was common, his dress or diet was not charac-



terized by any extraordinary rigour, yet he is the model of religious poverty; he was so unto death, and he taught us where its perfection lay when he said: "the Son of Man hath not a place whereon to lay his head." To possess nothing, to make use of what is given dependantly on the will of another, to love and to desire that whatever we do use may be so common as not even to seem to be appropriated to us—in this, and in this alone, the genuine spirit, the perfect practice of poverty, consists. Hence it would seem, that to give to Poor Clares the dominion of immoveable possessions would be a greater departure from the spirit of the rule, than to abrogate its rigorous fasts. Yet when such leave was granted, the religious remained Poor Clares, because the substance and spirit of the rule remained as long as these things were not possessed or used without leave; in a word, the Religious of this Convent have embraced the rule of Saint Clare. The Church has not given them, nor will she ever give them any other, since at their profession they are still obliged to vow to live according to the form of life and the rule now to be interpreted and practised; not according to the

declarations of the Friars Minors, but solely according to the Pontifical decrees now in force, and especially those of the present Pope Pius VII. These religious are then Poor Clares, but in virtue of a new obligation which they have contracted, they are bound to devote their lives in a particular manner to the care and instruction of poor female orphan children. This is indeed an accidental addition to the rule, but to every sister professed in this Convent it is an essential duty of religion added to the solemn vows, by the authority of the Holy See. Many of the precepts added to the original rule by the authority of the General Ministers and Chapters of the Friars Minors, as well as other accidental observances prescribed in the rule itself, were incompatible with this new duty; and these the present Pope has dispensed with, or rather commuted with the fourth vow, which alone is of more merit in the sight of God, and of more utility to the Church, than all these observances could now be, how meritorious soever in themselves. Hence, in consequence of the dispositions of the Papal decrees in favor of this Convent, it differs from other Convents of the same order; 1st, by the

additional vow of devoting their lives in a particular manner to the care and instruction of poor female orphan children. 2ndly, that they are ever to be under the jurisdiction of the Ordinary of the Diocess, whom the religious are to obey as their chief superior. 3rdly, that no precept or decree of the order or prescription of the rule and form of life binds under sin mortal or venial, except such precept, decree, &c., treat of some obligation of the vows, for then the transgression of such precept would be a sin against the vows, though not against obedience. 4thly, the obligation of reciting the divine office is commuted into that of saying daily the little office of the Blessed Virgin. Those changes have rendered it necessary to draw up the following Constitutions, which contain the substance of the rule and form of life, point out the practice of the fourth vow, and regulate the internal discipline of the Convent in its present state. From them it results, that the rule of Saint Clare, as here proposed, retains the perfection of its contemplative spirit, and has acquired the additional merit of the active life; and whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them, and mercy, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

First Part.

WHICH TREATS OF THE RELIGIOUS VOWS.

CHAPTER I.

Of the general Vows of Religion.

The vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, constitute the essence of religious life. By them precisely the religious contracts the obligation of daily tending to the perfection of the Gospel, by the practice of the evangelical counsels, and is thus constituted in a state essentially different from Christians in the world. Though the substance of these vows is alike essential to every religious order, yet the characteristical mark of each is frequently found in the accidental perfection of one or other of these virtues, and whilst the vows themselves essentially distinguish the Religious from the Christian engaged in the world, the high perfection of one of these vows referred to the peculiar object which the holy founder had in view, constitutes the

appropriate spirit of each religious institute, and respectively distinguishes them from each other. Thus the most perfect poverty is the characteristic of the rule of Saint Francis; the highest perfection of obedience distinguishes the institute of Saint Ignatius. The peculiar spirit of her rule should be the constant study of the religious soul. These reflections are meant to shew her, that she cannot attain to perfection unless she be guided by and animated with it in all her actions.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Vow of Poverty.

1. Poverty is the characteristic virtue of the rule of Saint Clare; it gives to her children the distinctive appellation of Poor Clares. They are not therefore to content themselves with the renunciation of the independent dominion or use of property, in which the substance of the vow consists, but as far as possible, everything about them should evince the unfeigned estimation in which they hold this evangelical virtue. Plain diet should

show the spirit of poverty in the refectory ; plain and only necessary furniture, plain and cheap clothing, should prove that poverty extends to their cells and dress ; nay, its influence should be seen in their books and pictures, without ornamented binding or costly frames.

2. The possessions of the Convent will be in common ; food and raiment, and other necessaries, will be distributed to each out of the common fund, by order of the Abbess. The religious will consider what they thus receive as merely given for their use, being in a constant disposition to return it if required.

3. The religious will not accept of any gift from their parents, relatives, or others, nor dispose of what was given for their use, without the permission of the Abbess : with her leave, however, they may receive what is given, and if they stand in need of it, they may use it, but if not, the Abbess will charitably give it to them who may want it.

4. The Religious will not keep deposits of money or other articles of much value in their cells, except the Abbess, the Procuratrix, and the person whom the Abbess shall appoint as Treasurer for the orphan charity. For this

latter purpose every Religious may receive benefactions, but will, as soon as an opportunity shall offer, deliver up what she may have received to the Treasurer so appointed.

5. To keep alive the spirit and excite themselves to the practice of holy poverty, Poor Clares should ever have in view the great example which their venerable patriarch Saint Francis, and their holy mother Saint Clare, proposed to them, as the object of their imitation ; Jesus born in poverty, laid in a manger ; Jesus naked on the cross ; Jesus poor even in death, buried in another's tomb.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Vow of Chastity.

Chastity, as professed by Religious, being absolute of its own nature, and not admitting any limitation or degrees of voluntary perfection, it is not necessary to prescribe any rule concerning its practice, since it is evident how carefully it is to be observed. This virtue constitutes the religious soul, the spouse of Jesus Christ; and that name must ever induce the faithful religious to emulate an-

gelical purity in mind and body. All will remember that this precious treasure is to be preserved only by the constant mortification of their senses, and a deep feeling of horror for everything that could in the least diminish the fervour of their love for their heavenly spouse.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Vow of Obedience.

1. Of the three religious vows, obedience is the most excellent and the most important. Its superior excellence arises from the nature of the sacrifice which it makes to God, viz., our own will. It is this vow that formally constitutes the christian, the child of religion, since from it arises the relation of superior and subject, without which no religious order can exist. The more extensive the object of any religious institute is, the greater is the necessity of obedience, which must influence every action, and guide the religious soul in the attainment of the end of the institute she has embraced. The sisters of this religious family, having enlarged the sphere of

their obligations, have, therefore, more special motives to aspire to the perfection of this virtue, and they should make the practice of it their particular study. They should accustom themselves to consider the Abbess as holding the place of Jesus Christ in their regard, and they should ever remember that, in imitation of Him who became obedient even to the death of the cross, they have for ever renounced their own will, and resigned themselves, without reserve, in all things not manifestly sinful, into the hands of their superiors. In all matters, therefore, whether of great or little moment, whether agreeable or disagreeable, they are to consider themselves bound to receive the commands of the Abbess with the highest respect, and to execute them with the utmost promptitude, exactness, and alacrity, as if they proceeded from the mouth of Christ himself, for whose sake alone the religious soul became obedient, and whom she really obeys in the person of the Superior, who commands in his name.

2. Saint Clare will have her children to receive appointment to the offices of the house in the same spirit of obedience, and earnestly charges them never to refuse or to resign any

employments to which they may be appointed or canonically elected, without reasons of indispensable necessity.

3. The same perfection of obedience will teach them to anticipate the command of the Superior, to offer themselves willingly when any arduous or humble work is to be done; nay, perfect obedience will extend its influence to the understanding, as far as the pious inclination of the will can persuade that power of the soul, that what is ordered by the Superior is best to be done. True obedience does not distinguish the sound of the bell from the voice of the Superior; by both God speaks, and should be obeyed with equal fidelity.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Fourth Vow.

1. The sisters admitted into this Convent, beside the essential duty of ever attending to their own perfection, must keep constantly in view the particular obligation they have contracted, of dedicating their lives to the care and instruction of poor female children, which is the object of the fourth vow made at their

profession. In the discharge of this additional duty Poor Clares will find a new means of attaining the perfection of holy poverty so characteristic of their rule. Here everything breathes the spirit and tends to increase the love of religious poverty. Not the rich or great of this world, but the poor little ones of Jesus Christ, are the objects of their toil and care ; not the wealth of this earth, but the treasures of heaven alone are to be their recompense. The sisters then of this religious family should highly esteem a duty in itself so meritorious, and to them so great a help to acquire the perfection of the appropriate spirit of their vocation. They should gratefully acknowledge the interposition of Divine Providence in their behalf, and thank that God who, through the intercession of their holy Foundress, hath guided them to their present state of religious existence, to which the Holy See has given perpetual stability by an apostolic brief, and by adding this fourth vow to their other religious engagements has united the most meritorious duty of the active life to the contemplative spirit of Saint Clare. They should animate themselves to the faithful discharge of this meritorious duty by reflect-

ing how gladly their holy Mother exchanges in their regard, in the times and country in which they live, her rigorous lents for the never-ceasing labours of the schools, her long psalmody for frequent instruction to the poor destitute female. They should remember that God has promised that they who instruct others to justice shall shine like stars in the firmament for all eternity. They should be persuaded that to them Jesus Christ addresses the words : "Suffer the little ones to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven ;" "Whatsoever you do to the least of these, you do unto me :" and that by giving them this charge He, in some measure, associates them with himself, and makes them co-operate with his own mercy for the salvation of his creatures.

2. The religious are not to consider themselves at liberty to receive money or any other temporal emolument for the instruction which they have vowed to give to the poor.

3. Although the Sisters of this Convent are not bound to instruct any but the children of the orphan establishment which is annexed to it, yet, if their number allow it, and the bishop deem it expedient, they may have a

day school for poor girls within their enclosure, but apart from the orphan house, at least so far as to prevent any communication between the children of both schools.

4. When a Religious is appointed mistress of a school or class, she shall, with great humility, charity, purity of intention, and in the spirit of obedience so strongly recommended by her holy Mother, undertake the meritorious charge, always confiding in His divine assistance who promised to esteem, as done to himself, whatever good she may do to the least of these his little ones.

5. At the beginning of school the mistresses will raise their hearts to God, offering to Him the labour they are about to undergo, through the mediation of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Guardian Angels of the children, to whom they will frequently recommend them, and for whom they will inspire the children with a tender devotion. They will instruct the orphans in reading, writing, arithmetic, and such works as are suitable to their sex, age, and condition ; but amidst the various branches of education to which their time is to be devoted, the Religious will recollect that the Christian doctrine,

pure morals, and correct manners, should be the principal objects of their attention.

6. The Religious, in explaining the catechism, will abstain from abstruse reasoning, and content themselves with enlarging in such manner and language as is best adapted to the capacity of the children, on the articles of faith more necessary to be known, as are all those contained in the Apostles' Creed, and on the practical duties of a virtuous life, as morning oblation, night prayers, manner of examining conscience, necessity of frequenting the sacraments, qualities of a good confession, and method of devoutly assisting at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and of approaching the holy communion. They should deeply impress on their minds the necessity of attending to these practical duties, as the only means of keeping the commandments of God and of his church, both of which must be observed, or else faith, deprived of charity or the love of God, which ever produceth good works, will not avail to salvation, and hope will soon degenerate into presumption or despair. They will inspire them with a great horror of sin, conceived from the knowledge of the insult it offers to the infinite majesty of

the God of heaven and earth, infinitely good in Himself, and ever good to us ; from the miseries that are justly inflicted on sinners, even in this life, and from the eternal misery which awaits them in the next life if they die impenitent. They should frequently tell them that a love of industry, of modesty, and truth, is not only necessary to their happiness in their passage through the present life, but that these are virtues particularly required of them by Almighty God. When thus instructed, the children will be prepared for their first communion, and great care will be taken to impress them with a due sense of that sacred action, and of the influence it may have on the moral conduct of their future lives. When once admitted to holy communion, care shall be taken that they approach the sacrament devoutly at least once a month.

7. As the art of governing depends much on the knowledge of the dispositions, habitual faults and inclinations of the subject, each mistress will make these an object of attention and study, so that, as far as may be, she will endeavour to obtain a perfect knowledge of the mind and heart of every child committed to her care, and thence be able to give, when

required, such advice as may tend to forward her progress in virtue, and assist the Abbess in governing and disposing of all. This knowledge is also necessary, that she may be enabled to employ the means most proper to excite ~~them~~ diligence and to correct their faults. In general, they must be taught to perform every duty through a motive of religion, because God requires that we should perform the duties of our state with exactness, purity of intention, and perseverance. When they deviate from this universal principle of the Christian's daily duty, maternal advice, accompanied with gentle persuasion, should first be used in such manner and language as to touch the heart, and convince the mind that their own good is the object and motive of the advice. Should this method fail, shame of a public reprimand before their assembled companions might be next used. Severe chastisement last and least of all should be employed. In exercising this duty of correction, the Religious should always renew their intention by an elevation of their heart to God, and carefully suppress even the least emotion of anger, impatience, or dislike.

8. At a convenient hour each day a spir-

tual lecture shall be read in each school for about twenty minutes, but on no occasion ever longer than half an hour. And when the bell rings for the *Angelus*, at noon, they shall all say it, and be well informed of the nature of this laudable devotion, and of the indulgences which the Church has granted to the practice of it. After the *Angelus* they shall pause for five minutes, making a little examen of conscience, and renewing, in spirit, their morning oblation.

9. Private examinations, to ascertain the progress of the children, should be held in the presence of the Abbess and all the Religious twice a year. There should be a more public one (if possible about mid-summer), to which the friends and promoters of the charity should be invited.

10. The children must sleep separately ; and at the times of rising and going to bed, a Religious should be appointed to assist in each dormitory, who will see that all rise and retire to rest in profound silence and with great modesty.

11. As the health of these little ones of Jesus Christ is to be an object of particular care, great attention must be paid to their

diet, which should be of wholesome quality, sufficient in quantity, and served to them at regular times. For the same reason the Religious must see that great cleanliness be attended to by them in their rooms, clothes, and persons ; that they be every day washed and combed ; that they, and everything about them throughout the Orphan House, be neat and orderly. There should, if possible, be an infirmary separate from the Orphan House, or at least there should be rooms set apart for the sick, to which they should be removed at the first appearance of any serious illness, and every necessary medical aid should be administered to them without delay. The Religious should often reflect that she is constituted by God's providence in the place of the mother of the hapless orphan, and, with maternal affection, she should minister cheerfully to her wants and infirmities.

12. A book shall be kept in the Orphan House in which shall be registered the name of every child, the date of her admission, her age, and particular circumstances ; the day on which she was provided for out of the house, the situation in which she was placed, and the name of the person to whom she was given.

in charge. Should any be dismissed the house, the day and cause of dismission shall be entered ; as also, should any die in the house, the day of her death, and the nature and duration of her illness.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Enclosure.

1. Though the vow of enclosure is not essential to the religious state, it is of the utmost consequence for the attainment of religious perfection. Saint Clare strictly enjoined the observance of it to her Religious ; and the sisters of this convent, desirous to preserve the spirit of their holy Foundress, and to devote their whole lives, without interruption, to the fulfilment of those solemn engagements which are contracted on entering the religious state, have bound themselves to perpetual enclosure, according as the circumstances ~~at~~ time and place will permit, of which circumstances the bishop is the natural interpreter. Cases of extreme necessity, as immediate danger of death from fire, &c. would excuse a sudden and temporary depar-

ture from the precincts of the convent. In other cases the express declaration of the Ordinary is to be had before any professed Sister can lawfully pass the boundaries of the enclosure.

2. The spirit of enclosure does not consist in always living within the walls of a convent, but in flying from the world in heart and mind. Hence the Religious are not to desire, nor are they to be permitted, to see too frequently their secular friends, or to hold conversations excessively long with them. When strangers enter the convent, only the Sister appointed for the purpose is to question them or enter into conversation with them. No other is even to appear, unless with leave, when called for by name, or sent for by the Superior ; and this is to be understood of externs of every description and quality. The sister who is appointed to treat with workmen, tradesmen, &c., should only speak on the business on which they came. She, and all who, with leave, speak to strangers, should never interrogate them about the rumours of the world, or the vanities of secular life ; nor should they manifest the least curiosity of knowing the history of the

visitors, of their families, or of others in the world, ever remembering that Jesus Christ expects in the religious soul the sentiment implied in his awful words : “let the dead bury their dead : follow thou me.”

3. In the winter months, the convent door shall not be opened before Seven o’Clock in the morning ; it shall be shut at Six in the evening. In the Summer months it may be opened at Half-past Five in the morning ; but must be shut at Half-past Eight in the evening. These hours, however, are submitted to the discretion of the Abbess, who, if it be found expedient, may alter them, or on extraordinary occasions otherwise dispose.

4. Lodgers or pensioners shall not, under any pretext whatever, be admitted into the convent.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

The Second Part.

WHICH TREATS OF OTHER DUTIES AND VIRTUES
OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Office.

1. The Holy See, in consideration of the labour and merit of the fourth vow made by the sisters of this convent, has been pleased to commute in their favor the obligation of reciting the Breviary, according to the custom of the Poor Clares, into that of daily reciting the *Officium Parvum* of the Blessed Virgin as contained in the Roman Breviary.

2. The Religious will assemble at the appointed hours to perform this duty in union with the Church Militant on earth, and the Church Triumphant in heaven. Convinced that the value of the sacrifice of praise depends not on the length but on the fervour of prayer, they will be careful to prepare for it with requisite intention, and recite it with

steady attention and devout affection. The choir tone shall be plain and uniform ; precipitation must be avoided, and the usual pauses observed.

3. Those who may have been absent (which, without necessity, should never happen) will say privately, as soon as convenient, the hours or the part which was recited during their absence in the choir ; and as far as they can they will conform to the hours observed in reciting the Office of the Breviary.

CHAPTER II.

Of Mental Prayer and Frequentation of the Sacraments.

1. The Religious should have a great affection for mental prayer, and endeavour to acquire a great facility in the practice of it, as it is one of the most powerful means of making that daily progress in perfection to which every Religious is bound, and of preserving that union of mind and heart with their heavenly spouse which makes the religious life a life truly hidden with Christ in God. Immediately after their morning ob-

lation they shall every day make, in the choir, meditation for half an hour, and another for the same space in the evening. The mysteries of our Blessed Saviour's life, passion, and death, &c., should frequently be the subject of these meditations ; and from each they should draw not only devout affections and solid resolutions, but also some thought or sentiment which, stored in the mind, will revive these affections frequently in the day, and thus promote union with God, which is the perfection of spiritual life.

2. All shall hear Mass every day, make an examination of conscience before dinner, and another at night ; they shall also read for a quarter of an hour some spiritual book.

3. All should go to confession once a week, and receive devoutly the Most Holy Sacrament on Sundays and festivals. They may also go to communion on all feasts of the second class : to communicate oftener, besides the approbation of their confessor, they must also have that of the Abbess.

CHAPTER III.

Of Spiritual Exercises and Renovation of Vows.

1. Each year the Religious will, for eight days, perform those spiritual exercises called retreat.
2. Renovation of vows being a most efficacious means of renewing the first fervour of religious souls, and consequently of renewing the spirit of their vocation, without which their actions would ill correspond to the special love of their heavenly spouse, the Religious will, on the morning on which they finish the retreat, renew their vows in the choir after the following manner : “ Almighty and Eternal God, I, Sister, [N. N.] do ratify, before Thee and the whole court of heaven, the vows I made at my profession, and again promise to thy Divine Majesty to observe, all the days of my life, poverty, chastity, and obedience, and to devote myself in a particular manner to the care and instruction of ~~a~~ poor female orphan children ; understanding all these things according to the form of life and rule of Poor Clares, as explained and mitigated by the authority of

the Holy See, and particularly by the briefs of our holy Father Pope Pius VII. in favor of this convent. I therefore most humbly beseech thy divine goodness, through the passion and death of Lord Jesus Christ, to receive this holocaust in the odour of sweetness, and as thou hast graciously inspired me to offer it, so to mercifully grant me abundant grace daily to continue and perfect it. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

Of religious Modesty, Charity, and Humility.

1. Religious persons should ever recollect that the perfection of the amiable virtue of charity is required in them by their Divine Spouse, who particularly addresses to them his favourite precept: "This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you." The perfection of this virtue will give them that spirit of unanimity which distinguished the primitive Christians, the first models of religious communities, in which there ever should be but one heart and one soul. The sisters of this Convent will therefore cherish this divine virtue as one of the

richest ornaments of a religious life, and avoid, with the utmost care, whatever could tend in the slightest degree to disturb or weaken that perfect union which should subsist among them. Their charity being founded upon God alone, in whom and for whose sake they are to love each other, it should extend invariably and alike to every member of the community, excluding all coldness and indifference on the one hand, all particular friendships and partialities on the other. All private parties or meetings, even in the hours of recreation, should be avoided, as tending to weaken this spirit of general union; having all things in common each should make herself all to all. The sisters will be ever ready to bear with patience the defects of each other, remembering the words of Saint Paul: "Bear ye one another's burthens, and thus you will fulfil the law of Christ."

2. Charity will soon inspire those easy, cheerful, yet grave manners, which characterize religious modesty, and form the exterior deportment which becomes virgins consecrated to Jesus Christ. This deportment will be the index of a mind equally free from restraint and levity; it will give to the eyes that

humble inclination that bespeaks recollection almost natural, because wholly unaffected ; the countenance, ever serene and cheerful, will exhibit that religious gravity that is never lost by loud laughter, hasty or noisy talk ; the same religious gravity will moderate every action and gesture ; even the gait and walk of religious will show a recollected mind. Haste may be necessary, hurry and precipitation are unknown to religious modesty.

3. Neither charity nor modesty can subsist without great humility and internal mortification of self-will, self-humour, and curiosity. The connexion of these virtues should much encourage the religious soul to practise them ; one will lead to the other.

4. Humility, and its constant attendant, internal mortification, the Christian's most meritorious penance, will inspire the religious soul with a love of those offices which the world considers menial and contemptible, but which religion knows so well how to ennable, by employing them to exercise and improve that lowly spirit that God has promised to exalt in glory. The same spirit will rejoice when faults or defects, whether moral or natural, incidental or habitual, are noticed and

corrected. Such offices, such correction, will be received from the Superior with humility and gratitude, and fervent prayer will recommend to heaven all who contribute to this great work of religious charity. The religious of this Convent will frequently make these solid virtues the object of their petitions to their heavenly spouse, and the subject of their particular examen.

CHAPTER V.

Of Exterior Penance.

1. The religious life is essentially a life of penance; constant fidelity in performing each action in the manner, time, and place prescribed by the rule, not only supposes that internal mortification of the will, humour, and desires, in which the genuine spirit of penance consists, but also it will offer to God the reasonable homage of our bodies, kept in continual action and restraint. The holy See has indeed been graciously pleased to dispense the religious of this Convent from the rigorous fasts of the rule and form of life of the Poor Clares; but in their stead are substituted the care, labour, and fatigue attendant on the

education of poor children, austerities indeed of another nature, but which make a complete sacrifice of the body, its ease and its health, and which even in rigour exceed the others, inasmuch as they involve care of mind and fatigue of body, as they are more numerous, without hope of mitigation, without respite or term. Let these be undergone in the spirit of penance; let each religious make an offering of them at the foot of the cross, to atone for her own past sins and daily failings, and for the iniquities by which Almighty God is so grievously offended in the world; let this offering be daily made in the spirit of faith and penitential love; and great will be its effect in overcoming rebellious nature, great its value in liquidating the debt due to Divine Justice, which is the adequate object of the virtue of penance. This will not cause the religious to lessen their love for more specific practices of corporeal penance, used by all religious, and prescribed by their rule; they will not however practise them even in private, without the advice of their Confessor, nor ever in public without the additional leave of the Abbess. They will, however, besides the fasts of the Church as observed in

this Archdiocese, keep as ecclesiastical fasts the vigils of their holy patriarch Saint Francis, and of their holy mother Saint Clare.

2. The public accusation and correction of faults, in itself so great a penance, and in its effects so conducive to perfection, will also be punctually observed, as prescribed by the rule and practice of Poor Clares. Once a week the Abbess, on the day and hour that she will judge convenient, will order the bell ~~of~~ of obedience, to be tolled for the chapter of faults, from which no religious, or even novice, or lay sister shall be absent, without the express leave of the Abbess, for some urgent reason. The Abbess will first invoke the Divine Assistance, and make the general recommendations as prescribed, after which each religious will, in turn, accuse herself with true humility, and a desire of amendment of the faults she may have committed against the discipline of the Convent or against the exterior practice of religious duties, and of those virtues which should regulate their conduct towards each other, as charity, humility, &c. The novices and lay sisters will first tell their faults, and having received from the Abbess advice and penance for them,

they will humbly return thanks, and retire from the chapter room; then the professed Choir Nuns will tell their faults, each according to her rank.

3. No sister shall accuse another in chapter, unless the Abbess desire her, and none shall reply without the Abbess's permission, to any accusation which shall be made against her. To accuse a sister in chapter of any notable fault, (and no other but notable faults should be made a subject of accusation,) the testimony of two or three would be requisite; if the fault were known but to one, and an accusation were deemed expedient, it should be mentioned in private to the Abbess. A notable fault it would be, to tell the secrets of chapter, to give or receive letters without leave, to have too frequent or too familiar intercourse with seculars, to offend any one by rude or angry words, to slight the remonstrances of any superior, to be habitually absent from common duties, and such like transgressions, which show more malice than the ordinary defects of human frailty. No sister should be accused more than twice in the same chapter, nor should any one afterwards speak of what happened therein, without

special leave, should such ever appear necessary. The Abbess will impose penances according to the rule and accustomed usage, and when these are to be performed in public she will see that they are done in a manner that bespeaks the spirit of penance.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Silence.

Silence being highly conducive to that interior recollection which is necessary for advancement in a spiritual life, and being on this account strongly recommended in the rule of Saint Clare, the religious, when no duty requires the contrary, should cherish a love for this meritorious practice, and at least observe it with great exactness when and where it is prescribed. Silence is prescribed to the religious from the end of the evening recreation until Hours have been said the next morning, also in the Choir, in the Chapter, except with leave of the Abbess, and in the Refectory during meals. When it shall be necessary to speak during the time or in the places of silence, (as must be the case

with those who attend the poor children night and morning,) it should be only in a low voice, and concerning such things as could not be conveniently deferred.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Refectory.

1. At the appointed hours the religious will all assemble in the Refectory, where they shall be served alike, except the sick. Should the health of any sister evidently require a different regimen, the Abbess will charitably allow it.

2. During the time of dinner there shall be a lecture from some pious or instructive book, to which all shall be attentive, that both mind and body may at the same time receive their proper food. Grace shall be said before and after meals, as in the Roman Breviary.

3. No one shall be allowed to dine in any other apartment but that allotted for the common Refectory, without special leave of the Abbess, which is only to be granted on account of health, or for the sake of the sick.

Those who may be occupied during the first table, shall dine at the second, where every thing shall be observed as at the first.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Cells.

1. It has been already said, that poverty should appear in the cells as well as in the persons of the religious. Each, however, will have a chair, a table, a shelf or two, for a few good books, a desk or drawers for papers, a crucifix, a few pious pictures. Their beds shall have curtains of some cheap materials; each shall have a palliass~~s~~, mattress, feather bolster, sheets, blankets, quilt. Should infirmity render a feather bed necessary, the Abbess will order it, as well as every other accommodation which may be requisite for the health of the sisters. Let her, however, take care that the furniture of the cells be such as become Poor Clares, and, as far as may be, alike for all.

2. The religious will retire to their cells after night prayer, in order to be in bed at the hour prescribed.

3. No one shall enter the cell of another at any time without leave, nor open the door until desired to enter by the sister from within.

4. Great attention should be paid by the religious to cleanliness and neatness in their cells, persons, clothes, &c., an attention which contributes much to health and edification.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Infirmary and Care of the Sick.

1. Great care should be taken that the various and continual occupations of the Orphan House be no hindrance to the necessary attendance on the sick, who should never, under any pretext of other duties, fail to experience all those kind and constant attentions which their sickness may require. Poor Clares should never forget the affecting exhortation left them on this subject in their rule, to the following effect: "We exhort in our Lord all the religious present and to come, that for the love of God and the bitter Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they do not loathe or think it heavy to serve the sick, but that they serve them according to their necessities, in all charity and hu-

mility, considering Jesus Christ in their persons, who will say at the last day, ‘I was sick and you visited me; as often as you did it to the least of these you did it to me.’”

2. There should be a house, or at least apartments, allotted as an infirmary for the reception of the sick, and the immediate care of them should be entrusted to one of the sisters whom the Abbess and Discreets shall appoint Infirmarian. When any sister feels herself indisposed, she should tell her complaint to the Abbess or Infirmarian, and if it appear contagious, or otherwise alarming, it would be expedient that she should be removed forthwith to the Infirmary. All should be sensible that it would be a fault to conceal their infirmities or wants from the Abbess, as well as, on the other hand, after exposing them with candour, to be over solicitous for health and convenience.

3. When God visits a sister with any serious indisposition, she will remember that she has given herself already and entirely to our Lord Jesus Christ, and piously desiring that she may be united finally with her heavenly Spouse, the day and moment that he shall judge most expedient to his designs

of mercy, she shall resign herself in all things to the will of God ; and by patience, prayer, and strict obedience to her bodily and spiritual physician, edify her sisters, and prove to all that she receives alike sickness and health, life and death, as favors from the Sovereign Disposer of all things.

4. In any serious indisposition of the sick, the Abbess, or if she be lawfully hindered, her Vicaress, shall visit them every day ; and all will remember that they should consider the aged and the otherwise infirm as objects of special charity and attention, that they should visit and console them with sisterly affection, and cheerfully render them every assistance in their power, that could help to soften the pains of sickness, or enable them to turn their sufferings to spiritual profit.

5. When the indisposition appears serious, the Abbess will send for the physician, and she and the Vicaress will esteem it their bounden duty to see that every attention and every necessary aid, spiritual and medical, be promptly and regularly afforded. When the physician declares the sister in danger of death, the Abbess will give notice instantly to the Chaplain, who will administer the last

Sacraments to her, and all the religious shall be present during the ceremony; and from the time the danger is supposed to be immediate, two of the sisters will watch alternately every hour, and assist her by their prayers and exhortations. When the agony shall commence, or the moment of dissolution shall otherwise appear to be at hand, one of the sisters appointed to assist her will give notice to the Abbess or Vicaress, who, having assembled all the religious, will cause the recommendation of a departing soul to be read, and all shall continue in prayer until the dying sister shall expire.

CHAPTER X.

Of Prayers for the Deceased Religious and Benefactors of the Community.

1. Immediately after the decease of a religious each sister shall say fifty *Pater Nosters*, with a *Requiem* after each, for the repose of her soul. For the same purpose, beside the Masses and Services directed in the Roman Ritual, three low Masses shall be offered, and as many general Communions as there will be services. The Office of the Dead

will be recited according to the Roman Ritual. Each sister will say in particular for every deceased religious, three Offices of three Lessons.

2. Four times in the year, on days to be appointed by the Abbess, the Office for the Dead of nine Lessons shall be recited in choir by the religious, for the souls of the deceased benefactors of the community.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Employment and Distribution of Time.

1. As idleness, according to the admonition of the Holy Ghost, teacheth much evil, and as we must render an exact account of every moment of our precious time, the religious will be careful to be ever occupied in some edifying pursuit, even in those moments which are not allotted to common duties. Whatever time they have to spare from their different functions, they will diligently employ in reading, in manual works, or in any other manner that the Abbess shall prescribe.

2. But it is not enough that their entire time should be thus filled up, their occupations should be animated by the true spirit of religion. It is this spirit which distinguishes

the perfect from the imperfect Religious; their duties being for the most part common, the one scarcely differs from the other, except in the manner of performing them. It is this spirit of religion, diffusing itself through all their employments, that will ennable even their most ordinary actions, and render their whole lives precious in the sight of God. The Religious having, in a special manner, consecrated herself to the service of her heavenly Spouse, should consider that she is bound by peculiar ties to live only to please Him, and that she should be particularly careful to devote every thought, word, and action of her life, to prove the sincerity and the integrity of her sacrifice. In all her occupations therefore, God, and God alone, is the object she should ever have in view; and this pure intention of referring all to Him, should be considered, on her part, not so much a simple practice of piety, as one of the essential duties of her state. Without it her offering is imperfect; it may be a sacrifice to self-will or self-love, it cannot be a pure and acceptable holocaust in the sight of God. But where this intention is found, of referring every instant of existence to the divine honour, in union with the infinite merits of

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Jesus Christ, actions the most indifferent in themselves become precious by the motive which animates them; every thing then becomes a source of merit; the religious soul advances incessantly in grace, and every moment she lays up new treasures of glory for endless ages.

3. The means by which religious souls may preserve this purity of intention are: 1st.—to perform all their actions in the presence of God, considering that He sees them, and that, according to the manner in which they are performed, He will pronounce sentence on them. 2ndly.—To do every work in particular, as if it were the only one they had to do; by this they will avoid all hurry and precipitation in their actions. 3rdly.—To perform all the duties of every day, as if that day were to be the last of their lives.

4 The distribution of time, or the order of duties which are to occupy the day, shall be fixed by the Abbess and Discreets. This distribution being notified to the community, shall be inviolably observed by all, unless the Abbess and Discreets should find by experience that it would be useful to alter it.

END OF THE SECOND PART.

Third Part.

WHICH TREATS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CONVENT, OF ITS VARIOUS OFFICES, AND OF THE ADMISSION OF SUBJECTS.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Superior.

1. As this community has been, in a special manner, placed by our holy father Pope Benedict XIV., under the care of the Archbishop of Dublin, the Religious are to consider themselves as immediately subject to his authority, and to hold him as their first superior after the Holy See. If, on account of his numerous pastoral duties, he should not himself have leisure to attend to the immediate direction of the community, he will appoint a priest, on whose prudence, piety, and experience he can depend, to govern and direct under him, giving him the faculties necessary for this purpose.

2. The power of the superior will extend to the spiritual and temporal concerns of the Convent, principally with a view to the exact observance of the Rule and Constitutions, and to the maintenance of union and good understanding between the Religious and the Abbess; he will in all things support the authority of the latter for the effectual government of the Convent, and for the preservation of regular discipline, doing nothing without her concurrence, or without the knowledge and approbation of the Bishop.

3. When the Bishop is prevented from attending in person, the superior will officiate at Receptions and Professions. He will also provide confessors and preachers; twice or thrice a year, he will, as the Council of Trent ordains, provide extraordinary confessors, to whom all the Religious will present themselves.

4. No candidate for the Religious life will enter or be sent away without his knowledge, and the consent of the Bishop.

5. He will examine and sign the annual accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Convent.

CHAPTER II.

Of the Visitation.

1. Once a year the Bishop will hold a visitation of the Convent, to examine if regular discipline flourish therein, and the Rule and Constitutions be well observed. Should the Bishop not have leisure to hold the visitation himself, he will appoint a prudent, pious, and enlightened clergyman to hold it for him.

2. When the visitation opens, it is expedient that the visitor give an exhortation to the Religious, concerning the object of it, and the dispositions with which all should be ready to assist in rendering it efficacious for the preservation of discipline, and the removal of any abuse which may have crept into the community. All the sisters will then individually appear before him, one after another, beginning with the youngest, and will answer with the utmost candour all such questions as he shall put relative to the observance of the vows, the regularity of discipline, the government of the Abbess, and the diligence of other persons holding offices in the Convent or

Orphan House, the obedience of the Religious, the continuance of union amongst the sisters, the frequentation of the Sacraments, and such other questions as regard the object of his visitation. Should he, by this inquiry, discover any irregularity or disorder to exist, or any thing whatever, contrary to the spirit of the Rule and Constitutions, he will adopt such measures as may be most likely to reform every abuse, and restore good order, regularity, and union in the community.

3. The Abbess will take all possible care that the real state of the Convent be not, either by herself or others, kept from the knowledge of the visitor, as this, if done wilfully, would be a grievous breach of duty, for which severe punishment should be inflicted.

CHAPTER III.

The Election of the Abbess and of others who hold Offices in the Community.

1. In the election of the Abbess the Sisters are bound to observe the canonical form. The elected must be, at least, thirty years of

age, and five years professed ; she must have more than half the votes of the community ; and she should be distinguished for her virtue, prudence, experience, and love of discipline.

2. Previous to the elections the Religious will be careful to abstain from using the least influence, directly or indirectly, with their sisters to obtain the appointment of any individual, leaving the event wholly under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, whose light and assistance they should most fervently invoke.

3. At a convenient time, before they take place, the Abbess will acquaint the bishop thereof. During the week immediately preceding them the Office of the Holy Ghost will be said each day by the Religious in choir, and on the last three days of that period the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed. On the day appointed for the elections the Mass of the Holy Ghost will be said, and a general communion will be offered up, that the spirit of God may vouchsafe to preside over them.

4. The Vicarress will write, or cause to be written in the same hand, a sufficient number of billets, in each of which shall be written these words : "I choose for Rev. Mother

Abbess, Sister Mary ;" and the Vicarress shall deliver to each professed sister one of these billets, that she may write therein the name of her whom, in the presence of God, she thinks the most fit to fill that office.

5. On the day appointed, at a convenient hour, the Bishop, or his deputy, will attend, accompanied by another ecclesiastic beside the superior, and the Religious being assembled in the Chapter room, he will exhort them on the important duty they are going to discharge.

6. Before the election begins the *Veni Creator* will be said, after which the Religious will retire, and return to the Chapter room one after another, according to seniority, and each will put into a box prepared for the purpose, the name and surname of her whom she has chosen for abbess. If any of the Religious be unable, from indisposition, to attend in the Chapter room, the bishop, or person who presides in his place at the election, will depute two of the elder sisters to receive her billet under a sealed cover; having unsealed it, he will mix it with the rest.

7. When all the billets are collected the

President will count them. Should the number be more or less than that of the professed Religious, it will be necessary to proceed to a new scrutiny, but if the proper numbers be found he will open and shew them to his assistants, who will write down the name and sirname contained in each.

8. This being done, the Religious will assemble in the Chapter room, and the President will declare the votes, beginning with her who had the fewest, without, however, mentioning her name ; and she who shall be found to have more than half the votes shall be declared canonically elected. If there be not a majority of votes in favor of any individual, a new election must take place until it be obtained. Then the billets will be burned, and the President will confirm the election, saying : “*We confirm this election, and declare you, Sister [N .N.,] Mother Abbess of this community, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*”

9. The Abbess being confirmed, the bell shall be rung to announce the election ; she shall then take her place as Superior ; the *Te Deum* will commence, after which the

President will say : “*Confirma hoc Deus,*” &c. “*Actiones nostras,*” &c. Then all the Religious will, according to seniority, go and embrace their new mother, and acknowledge her for their true and lawful Abbess. :-

10. The Vicaress, Mistress of Novices, Procuratrix, and Assistant Mistress, will be elected in the same manner as the Abbess, except that a relative majority of votes will suffice, and that the Religious, instead of voting by billets, will mention by name the persons whom they wish to elect to these offices. The persons so elected, with four others to be chosen by the Chapter, will form the immediate council of the Abbess, called the Discreets, except when the total number of the community does not exceed sixteen, in which case the Chapter may elect two instead of four.

11. The new Abbess will assemble the Chapter for the election of a Sacristan, a Portress, and of the Discreets.

12. The elections will take place every three years, and it will be in the power of the community, if they deem it expedient, to re-elect the same persons for the same offices.

13. If any Religious die in office, or be

otherwise prevented permanently from exercising her functions, her place will be filled in the manner already mentioned, unless the time of the elections be near, that is, within six months, or thereabouts, in which case the Abbess and Discreets, with the approbation of the Superior, will appoint to the vacant office.

14. And that peace and charity be always amongst the sisters, we earnestly exhort them in our Lord Jesus Christ, that, in all elections and changes of offices, they avoid ambition, partiality, and intrigue, having in the votes they give no other object in view but the advancement of the glory of God, by promoting to the different offices those sisters whom, in the presence of the great Searcher of Hearts, they deem most worthy to fill them.

CHAPTER IV.

The Duty of the Abbess.

1. The Abbess should consider well the important charge she has undertaken, and the strict account she must render to Almighty

God of the flock committed to her care. She will shew herself to be the Superior of the community still more by an exemplary life than by the exercise of authority, that the Sisters, beholding in her the model of a perfect Religious, may be induced to copy after her good example more from affection than fear.

2. She will take care that regular discipline be duly observed, that the sisters live in union and charity, and that they attend with great diligence to the care and instruction of the poor children.

3. She will be particularly guarded not to shew the least appearance of particular friendship or partiality for any individual, as this might prove a source of disunion in the community ; she should rather follow the example of the apostle, becoming all to all, that she may gain all to Christ.

4. With maternal solicitude she will endeavour to procure the welfare and spiritual advancement of the Religious, without regard to birth, natural qualities, or any other advantages whatsoever. She will tenderly comfort and inspirit the dejected and troubled of mind, if there be any such, admonish with

charity those who have transgressed, and inflict such punishments, and enjoin such penances, as she may judge suitable to their situation, and expedient for their amendment.

5. She will take special care that the sisters be provided with all necessaries, and that all superfluities be excluded.

6. The Abbess is strictly bound to secrecy, whether in or out of office, with regard to all spiritual and interior communications, and is not to speak of anything relative thereto, even to the Bishop or Superior, except advice may be necessary, in which case she will beware of naming or otherwise making known the person in question, so that the Religious may, with entire confidence, have recourse to her in their doubts and difficulties.

7. She will preside in choir, chapter, refectory, and wherever she is present with the community ; and will occasionally visit the cells.

8. The Abbess is bound to consult the Discreets on affairs of importance. She will assemble them, at least every three months, to inquire into the state of the convent, and to deliberate on the measures most expedient for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the

community. She will always listen to their advice with condescension, and with an humble and earnest desire of profiting by their counsels.

9. She will assemble the Chapter of faults once a week.

10. A month before the profession of any novice, the Abbess will be careful that she be examined by the Bishop or his deputy, as ordained by the Council of Trent.

11. The usual expenditure of the house will be by the order or with the cognizance of the Abbess. If any considerable expense be requisite, she will consult with the Discreets, and obtain leave of the Superior.

12. When it may be thought advisable to exchange any property, or to commence a law suit, or to take money at interest, the Abbess will abstain from doing so until she shall have obtained the consent of the Superior and Chapter.

13. She will sign all deeds, chapter acts, leases, discharges, and receipts, the quarterly and yearly accounts of expenditure, and such other written documents as regard the spiritual and temporal concerns of the community.

CHAPTER V.

The Duty of the Vicarress.

1. As the rank of Vicarress follows that of Abbess, the election should fall on one of mature age, consummate prudence, and acknowledged advancement in the way of religious perfection.

2. The Vicarress will perform the duty of the Abbess, when the latter shall be absent, presiding in her stead in the Choir, Chapter, Refectory, and elsewhere. She will be watchful that regularity be preserved, and the orders of the Abbess be duly fulfilled. She will deem it a duty to assist and comfort the Abbess, in the discharge of her weighty obligations, maintaining with her the strictest union, and acting only according to her will and intentions. She will study to promote peace and charity among the Religious, and to preserve a good understanding between them and the Abbess. She will charitably watch over the wants of the Sisters, informing the Abbess thereof, and procuring for them every possible relief. She will see that all have sufficient clothing, according to the different seasons, and attend

to the execution of whatever the Abbess shall ordain for this purpose.

CHAPTER VI.

The Duty of the Mistress of Novices.

1. To the office of Mistress of Novices should be elected one of the most regular and prudent Religious, whose capacity and experience in spiritual matters will enable her to discern in her Novices the different effects of nature and grace, to give them a just sense of the arduous duties to which they are desirous to consecrate their lives, to train them to the practice of Christian perfection, and to ascertain their qualifications for the sublime state to which they aspire.

2. The Mistress of Novices should never forget, that on the impressions which it is her duty to communicate to the minds of her Novices, depends much their future advancement in a spiritual life, and the preservation of the genuine spirit of religion in the Community. She will therefore studiously endeavour to give them a just notion of the end which they should have in view in entering

the religious state, of the virtues which it requires, and of the obligations which it imposes, and that they may ever have before them a living admonition to become what they ought to be, her own life should be the model of that religious perfection, which it should be their ~~study~~ to attain.

3. She will often make them read over the Rule and Constitutions, on which she will occasionally give such instructions as her zeal and prudence shall suggest ; and she will accustom them, from the beginning, to the greatest possible exactness in submitting to all the regulations, and performing all the duties which are enjoined therein.

4. She will teach them how to meditate and perform the other spiritual exercises, also how to animate the active duties of their state with the spirit of interior recollection ; and she will make them render an account of the difficulties which oppose their advancement, and of the progress which they make in subduing them. She will likewise instruct them in the ceremonies of the Choir, and other observances.

5. She will inspire them with the tenderest charity for the poor orphans, and the most ardent zeal for their instruction and sanctifi-

cation. If not sufficiently instructed themselves, she will catechize and teach them, in such a manner, that they may be afterwards employed with advantage in teaching others.

6. She will instruct them how to regulate their deportment with regard to the Religious, and she will most particularly inculcate, ~~that~~ the Sisters should have but one heart and one soul, in Christ Jesus their heavenly Spouse, mindful that as He has, by the grace of their vocation, united them together in one body, they should always remain united in one spirit, the spirit of charity, which is the bond of perfection.

7. Her report to Chapter, concerning her Novices, will be entire, sincere, and exact, without disguise or exaggeration of any sort, having solely in view the glory of God, and the welfare of the Community, and remembering that a greater evil cannot befall a Community than to receive unfit subjects to profession, under any pretext whatsoever.

8. She will have a great dependence on and good understanding with the Abbess, giving her a faithful account of the conduct of those under her care, and she will do nothing contrary to her intention.

CHAPTER VII.

The Duty of the Procuratrix.

1. The office of Procuratrix should be filled by a Religious of judgment and diligence, who is moreover conversant in the affairs of the house, and calculated to edify, by her deportment, those世俗者, whom the duties of her office will oblige her to see.
2. The Procuratrix will receive the revenue of the Convent, giving suitable receipts, drawn in the name of the Abbess, who will affix her signature thereto. She will likewise, under the direction of the Abbess, pay off all debts, procuring the necessary receipts.
3. She will purchase all that is necessary for the Convent, and lay in good and cheap provisions at proper times, which shall be seen by the Abbess, and afterwards distributed by her permission, according as they shall be wanted. She will endeavour, in all things, to act conformably to the will and intention of the Abbess.
4. She will settle her accounts weekly, or as often as may be necessary, and will give a

quarterly detail of the receipts and expenses, in presence of the Community.

5. She will take care of the repairs of the Convent, and occasionally procure the roof and other things belonging to the house to be examined, that all be kept in due order and preservation.

6. When contracts are necessary, she will have their form read over, in the presence of the Abbess and Discreets, before the Attorney does so, lest anything should be introduced therein hurtful to the Convent.

7. She will have several books, wherein she will note the receipt, expenditure, and other things concerning her charge.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Duty of the Assistant Mistress.

1. To the office of Assistant Mistress will be chosen a Religious remarkable for intelligence, discretion, and zeal, for the Orphan Establishment. Her duty will be to assist the Abbess in superintending the Orphan House, and to transact, in concert with her, the business that regards it.

2. She will watch over the schools, and see that the regulations adopted for the Orphan House be punctually observed. Should she discover any deviation from order, she will report it to the Abbess.

3. She will carefully attend to the wants of the children, and order whatever supply may be necessary for them ; she will often visit the Dormitories, Infirmary, Refectory, &c., to see that all things are well ordered ; she will be watchful that the children be well instructed in the precepts of morality and the Christian doctrine, and will catechize them occasionally to observe their progress.

4. When there is question of receiving ~~new~~ a child into the Orphan House, the Assistant Mistress will minutely inquire if she correspond with all the conditions specified by the regulations of the House for the admission of objects.

5. She will give a quarterly account of the receipts and expenses of the Orphan House, in presence of the Community, getting them signed by the Abbess. The annual accounts she will have examined and signed by the extern Treasurer, and a copy of them sent to the Archbishop.

6. She will in all things depend on the Abbess, fulfilling, as far as possible, her intentions, and rendering to her occasionally an account of her charge.

CHAPTER IX.

The Duty of the Portress.

1. There should be chosen for this station an elderly and prudent Religious, who should be allowed a companion to assist her, and to be sent on necessary messages.

2. The Portress will keep the keys of the Convent door, and when obliged to open it, it will be for as short a space of time as possible, silence being kept as much as may be, while it remains open.

3. When she leaves her station, her companion will perform her duty.

4. The Portress and her companion are prohibited from delivering letters or notes, without the permission of the Abbess, the letters which regard the Orphan House are included.

5. Every evening at the appointed hour, the Portress will lock the Convent door, and carry the keys to the cell of the Abbess.

CHAPTER X.

The Duty of the Discreets.

1. The Discreets being, in all weighty matters, the Councillors of the Abbess, they will deem it a duty to give when required, such advice as they shall conscientiously believe the best to be adopted. In their meetings, they will propose, with great candour and meekness, whatever may appear to them most expedient for the spiritual and temporal interest of the Community, and the welfare of the Orphan Establishment, endeavouring, in the advice they give, to be guided only by a strict sense of duty, and having no other object whatever in view, but the greater glory of God.

2. They will not, without the express leave of the Abbess, mention, out of their meetings, what has been proposed or discussed thereat, nor the opinion given by any one on the subject of their deliberation.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Chapter or Assembly of Vocals.

1. When the Chapter is assembled to deliberate on the affairs of the Convent, all the

Vocals will assist thereat, and attentively listen in silence to whatever shall be proposed to their consideration, that they may be enabled to ~~form~~ form a correct judgment on the subject before them.

2. The matters to be treated of in Chapter are as follows :—the admission or dismissal of subjects ; their admittance to reception or profession ; and the cause of delay after the usual time ; all matters that may be a notable charge to the Convent, such as the reception of a subject without a fortune, or with one much less than what is customary ; all law-suits, the building or throwing down of any place belonging to the Convent, the purchase, exchange, or sale of any part of its property.

3. To avoid confusion and prolixity in discussing the matters which are brought before the Chapter, no one will speak out of rank, without permission. All will be careful to say nothing mortifying, or that indicates a contempt of the opinions of others. They will endeavour to form their judgments on the matters proposed, in the presence of God, without being carried away by human respect, passion, or particular affection. They will beware of espousing any opinion obstinately,

or of wishing to carry it to the prejudice of the liberty of voting. Should any one shew too great an attachment to her own opinion, or too great anxiety to draw others thereto, she will be reminded of her fault by the Abbess, and even silenced, if she seem desirous of persisting in it.

4. Every three months, or thereabout, the Novices will be spoken of in Chapter. Votes will be collected a month before the proposed time of reception, and two months before that of profession. If at any time it appear to the Community, that a postulant or novice is unfit for the religious life, she will be immediately dismissed. The Sisters will be particularly careful not to admit any subject to profession, without having taken the utmost care to ascertain, that she is possessed of great piety, unsullied reputation, sound understanding, and sufficient bodily strength to discharge the arduous duties of this holy institute, without in short having solid grounds to believe, that she brings with her all the marks of a true vocation. And that their decision on this important point may, with more certainty, be guided by the spirit of God, they are most earnestly cautioned to divest themselves of

every human bias, and every worldly consideration, and to resolve, in the sincerity of their hearts, that they will adopt the part which shall seem to them most likely to contribute to the honour of their dear Lord, and the advancement of the Community in the path of religious perfection.

5. Nothing of what passes in Chapter is to be divulged. A majority of votes will in all cases decide.

CHAPTER XII.

The Duty of the Secretary.

1. That the proposals made, and resolutions agreed to in Chapter and Council Assemblies be duly preserved, a Secretary will be appointed, who is to be chosen by the Abbess and Discreets.

2. Her principal duty will be to remark and register the opinions and conclusions of said assemblies, noting down the day, month, and year, and also the Abbess who presided.

3. There will be always three to remark the opinions of Chapter, namely, the Abbess, the Vicaress, and the Secretary ; the absence of any

of them will be supplied in this respect by the most elderly.

4. The Registers of the Chapter and Council Acts, and of Profession, and the seal of the Convent, will be locked up by two different keys, one of which will be kept by the Abbess, the other by the Secretary.

5. The Secretary will inscribe, in another book, the day of entrance of the religious, that of their reception, profession, and decease, which last she will notify to other convents, as the Abbess may desire.

6. She will be careful to have the registered deeds of Profession signed by the Religious herself, the Superior, Abbess, and Vicaress.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Entrance of Postulants, their Reception and Profession.

1. When any one solicits to be admitted a Member of this Religious Community, she will be examined relative to her vocation, by the Superior, Abbess, Vicaress, and Mistress of Novices. If she appear to them to have the necessary qualifications for a religious

life, and to be guided by the spirit of God to this holy Institute, she may be allowed to enter the Convent, and remain six months in a modest secular dress; at the expiration of which time, if she still persist in her desire to be admitted to the holy habit, the Community will proceed to vote for her reception.

2. Before reception she will be again examined by the Bishop, or his deputy.

3. Before she be received she will be made thoroughly acquainted with the spirit of the rule, with the nature, object, and extent of the religious vows made at profession, and with those points which are considered the most difficult in the life which she is desirous of embracing, that she may not, after reception, have cause to complain that she was not fully aware of the difficulties of a religious life.

4. If, on being proposed in Chapter, the majority of votes appear in her favour, she will prepare for reception. After reception she will remain two years in a state of further probation, before she can be admitted to profession.

5. Three months before the term of probation shall expire, or thereabout, the Novice will, with the permission of the Abbess, make her

first demand for holy profession in Chapter. She will then humbly beg of each of the Community, privately in her cell, to give her vote, that she be admitted to holy profession. Each Religious may then interrogate her, in such a manner, as may be likely to assist in forming a judgment of her vocation. About two months before the proposed time of profession, the Novice will make her second demand in Chapter, after which the Community will proceed to votes. If approved of, she will be withdrawn from the attendance of the Orphan House, that she may, with more recollection and fervour, prepare for her profession.

6. The form of profession will be as follows : "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. I [N.N.] do vow unto Almighty God, unto the most glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of Orphans, unto our holy Father Saint Francis, unto our holy Mother Saint Clare, unto all the Saints, and unto you Rev. Mother Abbess, and unto all others who shall succeed you in office, or who shall hold your place, to observe during my whole life time the Rule and Form of living of the poor Sisters of Saint Clare, given to her by the same Saint Francis, and

confirmed by our holy father Pope Innocent IV., and successively mitigated by our holy fathers Pope Benedict XIV., and Pope Pius VII., that is, to spend my life without any temporal property, in obedience and in chastity; and I do, in a particular manner, devote myself to the care and instruction of poor female orphan children; I do also vow to observe enclosure, according to the circumstances of time and place.

7. After profession each Religious will remain three years in the Novitiate, under the care of the Mistress of Novices, without having a vote in the elections, except in that of the Abbess.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the Lay Sisters.

1. The lay sisters admitted into this Convent to sanctify their souls by the practice of those virtues and offices which characterize the hidden life of Jesus Christ, should have a high esteem and great love for employments, which tend to resemble them to the Divine Spouse of their souls, who "came to serve and not to be served."

2. They will receive with humility, and execute with promptitude and fidelity, every office allotted to them in the Convent and Orphan House, and esteem themselves happy in a state of life which not only affords them abundant means of sanctifying their own souls, but also affords them continual occasions of contributing in their humble sphere to the sanctification of the little orphans consigned to the care of this religious community.

3. They will meditate as long as the other Religious, at the hours which the Abbess shall assign them.

4. They will say daily the office of *Pater Nosters*, as specified in the rule.

5. They will remember that the humble life which they lead, and for which Christ has promised to exalt them, must be sanctified by constant recollection, by union with the Child Jesus in the house of Nazareth, by the perfect observance of their holy vows, and by the solid virtues of humility and charity, which will make them respectfully attentive to the Choir religious, mild, meek, and affectionate to each other.

6. When employed in the Orphan House,

they will take care to edify the children by their serious and recollected deportment. They will confine themselves to the office with which they are charged, and not interfere in the business, or enter the apartments or offices of others, without leave.

7. The time of postulation for lay sisters should be at least nine months.

END OF THE THIRD AND LAST PART.

(A COPY.)

We approve by our authority of the above written Constitutions, and *order them to be exactly observed* by the Poor Sisters of Saint Clare, who are subject to our jurisdiction. In testimony of which we shall subscribe our name to these presents, written with our own hand, and affix to them our small Pontifical seal.

Dated Dublin, the tenth day of the month of February, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirteen, the Thirty-sixth year of our Consecration, and the Twenty-sixth of our Inauguration.

BR. JOHN THOMAS TROY,

(SEAL.)

Archbishop of Dublin.

Translated from the Latin Original by the Rev. M. P. KINSELA, *Capuchin.*





